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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

This letter addresses Docket #98N-1038

Please consider the following concerns while considering changes in the labeling or irradiated foods.

Consumers have a right to know where their food comes from and how it has been handled. More than three quarters of people polled in September 1997 by CBS indicated they were against food irradiation. If they are against it, why this attempt to minimize the disclosure statements? The attempt doesn't smell right (no pun intended). The labeling should be clear, easy to read (not the size of the ingredient labeling) and the logo should remain. The changes being proposed seem to have the effect of reducing notice that a product has been irradiated. If those who think irradiation is such a good idea, why are they unwilling to proclaim the process in an open manner?

Why should we expose people to cancer causing residue of irradiation? Why should we risk having people ingest radiolytic products, when we don't know the long term effect of doing so? Why not require our meat processing plants and food handling industries to clean up their act--- their food handling practices, instead of irradiating our food supply?

Our food supply already contains less vitamins and minerals because of the way our soil is being treated. Farmers typically only add about three minerals when they fertilize, hardly enough to make up for what has been removed during the growing season. Irradiation will further reduce the vitamin content in our food.

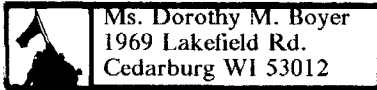
I'm also concerned about the killing of friendly bacteria and enzymes. What nutritional value will be left in our food supply?

Finally, how will we know if the food we are about to ingest is fresh or spoiled. Irradiation kills the bacteria which let us know when the food is spoiling.

We need more accountability, not less. Do not weaken the labeling of irradiated foods.

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98N-1038

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